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ACTION IO-11

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, APER, UNOG

SUBJECT: GENEVA STRIKE: CHRONOLOGY OF PROBLEM

REF: GENEVA 1458

1. SUMMARY: STRIKE OF UN G-LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN GENEVA WHICH BEGAN FEB 25 AND CONTINUES WITH SITUATION UNALTERED (AND STILL CONFINED TO EMPLOYEES OF UN PROPER AND NOT SPECIALIZED AGENCIES) OSTENSIBLY WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SALARY SURVEY. THIS MESSAGE ATTEMPTS TO PUT STRIKE INTO PERSPECTIVE OF LONG SEQUENCE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN ON THIS ISSUE. RESULT, BESIDES HIGHLIGHTING IN HINDSIGHT LESS THAN SKILLFUL MANAGEMENT OF PROBLEM, IS TO SUGGEST THAT OTHER UNDERLYING ISSUES MAY BE DRIVING ONES WHICH PRODUCED WORK STOPPAGE AT PALAIS, AND WE SHALL COMMENT ON THESE AND OTHER ASPECTS OF STRIKE IN SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESENT PROBLEM WITH BATTELLE SURVEY OF G-LEVEL SALARIES HAS ITS ROOTS IN NEW APPROACH ADOPTED BY ICSAB IN 1965 FOR CONDUCTING SURVEYS OF GENEVA G-LEVEL SALARIES. SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED THEREAFTER IN 1966 USING NEW APPROACH, METHODOLOGY OF WHICH PROVIDED

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FOR (A) RANDOM SAMPLE OF ALL BUT VERY SMALL EMPLOYERS

(TO AVOID CONTROVERSY OVER WHO ARE "BEST" EMPLOYERS);
(B) RANKING OF ACTUAL EARNINGS; (C) MATCHING AT 75TH
PERCENTILE (I.E. 75TH POSITION OUT OF 100 TO BE
CONSIDERED "BEST PREVAILING RATE"); (D) USE OF OUTSIDE
SURVEYOR; (E) STRATIFIED SAMPLE OF 136 FIRMS EMPLOYING
32,500 NON-MANUAL WORKERS (MEN AND WOMEN) IN GENEVA;
(F) TWO JOBS AT G.2 AND ONE EACH AT G.3, G.4, G.5
AND G.6 TO BE SURVEYED.

3. TO CONSTERNATION OF STAFF, AND SURPRISE OF ADMINIS-
TRATIONS, RESULTS OF 1966 SURVEY SHOWED UN PERSONNEL
OVERPAID BY 16.8 PERCENT. STAFF AND ADMINISTRATIONS
THEN AGREED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS TO ADOPT 12 PERCENT
AS OVERPAYMENT FIGURE, AND ICSAB THEREAFTER CONCURRED
IN THIS. HOWEVER, WHEN ACABQ WAS CONSULTED IN 1967
FIGURE WAS FURTHER REDUCED TO 11 PERCENT. IN ADMINISTRATION-
STAFF DISCUSSIONS WHICH ENSUED PROPOSAL WAS ARRIVED
AT IN 1968 TO MODIFY 1966 METHODOLOGY IN FOLLOWING
THREE SIGNIFICANT RESPECTS: (A) COMPARISONS
WOULD BE AT G.2 AND G.5 LEVELS ONLY; (B) SALARY
RATES OF MALE EMPLOYEES ONLY WOULD BE SURVEYED;
AND (C) MATCHING POINT WOULD BE RAISED TO 92ND RPT
92ND PERCENTILE. WE UNDERSTAND ICSAB ACCEPTED THESE
MODIFICATIONS, ALTHOUGH ONLY RELUCTANTLY SINCE IT
RECOGNIZED THAT USE OF 92ND PERCENTILE WOULD LIKELY
SINGLE OUT A SPECIAL, HIGHLY FAVORED CLASS IN PRIVATE
SECTOR AS MATCHING POINT. HOWEVER, TEST SURVEY
CONDUCTED IN 1968-1969 APPARENTLY DID NOT SEEM TO
YIELD ANY SURPRISING DISTORTIONS FROM POINT OF VIEW
OF ADMINISTRATIONS, AND INTERIM SALARY ADJUSTMENTS
WERE MADE ON THIS BASIS BETWEEN 1969 AND 1976.

4. AGREEMENT REACHED WITH STAFF IN 1969 CALLED FOR
NEW SURVEY TO BE CONDUCTED IN 1974 BASED ON 1973 DATA.
HOWEVER, FOR REASONS WHICH ARE NOT CLEAR, SURVEY WAS
NOT ACTUALLY INITIATED UNTIL JANUARY, 1975. RECALLING
RESULTS OF 1966 SURVEY ADMINISTRATIONS APPROACHED
1975 SURVEY IN COMPLAISANT MOOD, GIVING IT ONLY LOW-
LEVEL SUPERVISION, IN EXPECTATION THAT FINDINGS OF
SMALL PLUS OR MINUS 5 PERCENT WOULD RESULT. AT BEST
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WE CAN DETERMINE NO TOP MANAGEMENT ATTENTION WAS GIVEN
TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEW SURVEY. INDEED DECISION
APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN SOMEWHAT MECHANICALLY AT
AROUND P-3 OR P-4 MANAGEMENT LEVELS TO AGREE IN
ADVANCE (A) THAT BOTH SIDES BE BOUND BY RESULTS,
AND (B) ADMINISTRATIONS WOULD ACCEPT CONCEPT OF
RETROACTIVITY.

5. BECAUSE OF LINGERING CONTROVERSIES WITH RESPECT TO EFFECTIVE DATE, METHOD TO BE USED IN UPDATING SCALES FROM 1973 AND DATE FOR SUBSEQUENT SURVEY, BATTELLE WAS NOT ABLE TO COMMENCE SURVEY UNTIL SEPTEMBER. (PROBLEM OF DATE FOR SUBSEQUENT SURVEY WAS RESOLVED BY DECISION TO HOLD MEETING EARLY IN 1979 TO DECIDE WHETHER TO CONDUCT NEW SURVEY ON BASIS 1978 DATA, AND TO DO SO IF EITHER SIDE REQUESTED.)

6. BATTELLE REPORTED RESULTS OF ITS SURVEY IN DECEMBER 1975, SHOWING INCREASES DUE IN NET PAY OF 19.3 PERCENT FOR G.2 AND 26.5 PERCENT FOR G.5.

7. BY NOW, OF COURSE, MANAGERMENTS OF GENEVA BASED ORGANIZATIONS HAD ALL BECOME ENGAGED AT HIGHEST LEVELS. IN MEETING AMONG THEM JANUARY 13 IT WAS DECIDED TO SET UP WORKING PARTY TO EVALUATE BATTELLE REPORT, ESPECIALLY ITS METHODOLOGY. (ACTUALLY HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION HAD BEGUN TO FOCUS ON PENDING PROBLEM BY LATE FALL, DUE IN LARGE MEASURE APPARENTLY TO WHISTLE BLOWING BY ILO/DDG MCDONALD, BUT BY THEN SOME KEY EVENTS HAD ALREADY PASSED THEM BY AND, DESPITE SOME PROMPTINGS OF MIDDLE MANAGEMENT TO CONTRARY, ALL DIRECTORS GENERAL REPORTEDLY REACHED AGREEMENT PRIVATELY THAT COMMITMENTS UNDERTAKEN AT LOWER LEVELS TO ACCEPT RESULTS OF SURVEY AND CONCEPT OF RETROACTIVITY WOULD HAVE TO BE RESPECTED.)

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8. WORKING PARTY UNDER UN CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION BARBAROSA REACHED CONCLUSION IN REPORT CIRCULATED FEB 5 THAT METHODOLOGY USED IN BATTELLE SURVEY WAS HIGHLY FLAWED. (UNILATERAL QUERY BY ADMINISTRATIONS TO BATTELLE ABOUT THIS SEEDED RESENTMENT AMONG STAFF AND ELICITED APOLOGIES TO STAFF ASSOCIATIONS FROM, AT LEAST, WINSPEARE AND BLANCHARD WHEN THEY LEARNED THIS FURTHER CONTENTIOUS ISSUE HAD BEEN INTRODUCED.) ON BASIS WORKING PARTY CONCLUSIONS ON FEB 6 STAFF WAS OFFERED 4.5 PERCENT INCREASES EFFECTIVE FEB 1, WHICH STAFF REPS SHARPLY REBUFFED IN COMMUNIQUE ISSUED SAME DAY. HOPING TO FIND SOME MIDDLE GROUND WORKING PARTY THEN AGREED ON FEB 9 TO RECOMMEND FAMILY ALLOWANCES INCREASE BE RETROACTIVE TO OCT 1. THIS TOO REJECTED BY SPOKESMAN FOR STAFF AS FURTHER EXAMPLE OF "BREACH OF FAITH IN REFUSING TO HONOR SURVEY." ON FEB 11 INTERAGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE OF STAFF ASSOCIATIONS ISSUED NOTIFICATION THREATENING STRIKE.

9. SHORTLY THEREAFTER ILO DG BLANCHARD, FORCED TO FACE UP TO ISSUE BEFORE OTHERS IN CONTEXT IF ILO GOVERNING BOARD MEETING, DELIVERED STATEMENT OF HIS POSITION TO ILO PROGRAM, FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMITTEE FEB 20, LATER EMBODIED IN ILO REPORT QUOTED GENEVA 1458 PARA 4. IN HIS STATEMENT, WHICH DIFFERS SLIGHTLY FROM SUMMATION OF IT IN THIS REPORT, BLANCHARD ESSENTIALLY MADE THREE POINTS : A) ADMINISTRATIONS HAD AGREED TO ACCEPT RESULTS OF BATTELLE SURVEY AND IT WOULD CONSTITUTE "STARTING POINT FOR SYSTEMATIC STUDY;" B) HOWEVER, SURVEY HAD PRODUCED ONLY "CRUDE RESULTS" WHICH REQUIRED INTERPRETATION; AND C) HE OPPOSED SUBMITTING QUESTION OF G-LEVEL SALARIES TO ICSB AS BEING OUTSIDE ITS COMPETENCE UNDER ARRANGEMENTS ILO HAD APPROVED WITH IT. POSITION BEING TAKEN BY BLANCHARD RECEIVED APPROVAL OF ILO GOVERNING BODY FEB 25. BLANCHARD LAYED OUT THIS POSITION IN MEETING WITH ILO STAFF ASSOCIATION FEB 23. SOMEWHAT MOLLIFIED BY THIS ILO STAFF ASSOCIATION DECIDED TO PURSUE WITH REPS OF OTHER STAFF ASSOCIATION IDEA OF OPENING DISCUSSIONS WITH ADMINISTRATIONS ON THIS BASIS, WHILE EXPRESSING REGRET IN COMMUNICATION CIRCULATED FEB 25 THAT UN ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT ADOPTED SAME POSITION.

10. IN FACT, AS BEST WE CAN PIECE IT TOGETHER, UN DIRGEN WINSPEARE HAD ATTEMPTED TO SET OUR VERY SIMILAR POSITION IN MEETING WITH THE UN STAFF REPS ON FEB 23 IN WHICH HE (A) REGRETTED THAT BATTELLE HAD BEEN QUERIED UNILATERALLY BY ADMINISTRATIONS; (B) CONFIRMED HE WOULD RESPECT AGREEMENTS UNDERTAKEN BY UN ADMINISTRATORS WITH RESPECT TO THE SURVEY; (C) PROPOSED JOINT EXAMINATION OF G-LEVEL SCALES; AND (D) AGREED NOT TO REFER THE QUESTION TO ICSC.

11. HOWEVER, RELATIONS BETWEEN WINSPEARE AND HIS STAFF UNION ARE FAR MORE DETERIORATED THAN THOSE ENJOYED BY BLANCHARD AND OTHER DIRECTORS GENERAL. MOREOVER, RIVALRY IN PALAIS BETWEEN STAFF ASSOCIATION (TO WHICH ALL UN EMPLOYEES AUTOMATICALLY BELONG) AND STAFF UNION (A SMALLER MORE STRIDENT SYNDICALIST FACTION) APPEARS TO HAVE KEPT GULF OPEN AND THE STRIKE FEVER HIGH AMONG PALAIS WORKERS. UNWISELY, AS IT TURNED OUT, WINSPEARE COMPLIED WITH DEMAND THAT HE PRESENT THESE POINTS IN WRITING. ONCE HE DID SO, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STAFF COUNCIL COUNTERED WITH LENGTHY SHOPPING LIST OF NEW DEMANDS. (QUICK LOOK WE HAD AT LIST SHOWED MOST TO BE AS VAGUE AS THEY WERE FAR-REACHING.) LIST OF NEW DEMANDS WHEN SUBMITTED WAS DATED FEB 25, AND STAFF COUNCIL REACHED DECISION AT 4:00 AM SAME DAY TO CALL STRIKE. (POSSIBLY NEW LIST INTENDED TO REINFORCE JUSTIFICATION FOR DECISION BEING TAKEN.) STRIKE DECISION NEVER PUT TO VOTE OF FULL MEMBERSHIP. INDEED, CALL FROM FLOOR FOR REFERENDUM ON STRIKE WAS REJECTED OUT OF HAND BY STAFF COUNCIL SPOKESMAN AT MEETING OF STAFF WHICH WAS HELD FEB 27 TO EVALUATE ITS STATUS. SAME MEETING WITNESSED SCUFFLE WITH STAFF MEMBERS OPPOSED TO STRIKE.

12. EXCEPT FOR THE GATT UNION, WHICH CONDUCTED A ONE DAY SYMPATHY STRIKE FEB 26, THE STRIKE DID NOT AND HAS NOT YET SPREAD BEYOND PALAIS. PERFUNCTORY STATEMENTS OF SYMPATHY WITH PALAIS WORKERS HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING FROM STAFF ASSOCIATIONS IN OTHER GENEVA BASED ORGANIZATIONS, BUT ONLY GENUINE CONTRIBUTION HAS BEEN STRONG INTIMATION BY SEVERAL THAT THEY WOULD NOT COUNTENANCE TRANSFER OF UN MEETINGS TO FACILITIES OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONS. HOWEVER, EVEN THIS MOVE APPEARS TO BE CALCULATED AS MUCH TO KEEP THEM OUT OF THE FRAY AS TO SUPPORT THE CAUSE OF THE PALAIS STRIKERS.

13. AS REPORTED GENEVA 1458 THE EXECUTIVE HEADS OF

ALL ORGANIZATIONS MET FEB 27 AND DECIDED TO CLOSE
RANKS BEHIND THE POSITION SET OUT IN ILO BY BLANCHARD
(PARA 9 ABOVE).

14. SUBSEQUENT CHRONOLOGY IS SUBJECT OF SPOT
REPORTING. DALE

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